

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) An electric power steering apparatus comprising:

a ball nut rotationally driven by an electric motor through a gear train and having a female thread groove formed in the inner periphery thereof;

a rack shaft disposed through said ball nut on the axis thereof and having a male thread groove so formed in its outer periphery as to face to the female thread groove;

a ball screw mechanism having a number of circulation balls interposed between the female thread groove and the male thread groove; and

a housing ~~for~~ holding said ball nut rotatably through ~~said~~ a bearing,

wherein elastic members are interposed between said housing and said ball nut in order to permit said ball nut to make a predetermined displacement, and

wherein said elastic members include a first elastic member and a second elastic member respectively interposed between opposite ends of a race of said bearing and respective abutment surfaces.

Claims 2-8 (cancelled).

9. (new) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said elastic members provide a bias to the ball nut, so as to absorb backlash.

10. (new) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said race is an inner race of said bearing.

11. (new) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 10, wherein one of said abutment surfaces is defined by a stepped portion of said ball nut.

12. (new) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 10, wherein one of said abutment surfaces is defined by a stopper member mounted to said ball nut.

13. (new) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said race is an outer race of said bearing.

14. (new) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 13, wherein one of said abutment surfaces is defined by a stepped portion of said housing.

15. (new) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 13, wherein one of said abutment surfaces is defined by a stopper member mounted to said housing.

16. (new) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said elastic members include first and second elastic flange portions of an elastic bush having a cylindrical portion connecting said flange portions.

17. (new) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said cylindrical portion is interposed radially between an inner race of said bearing and a radially outer peripheral surface of said ball nut.

18. (new) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said race of said bearing is received in a recessed portion of said bush between said first and second elastic flange portions.

19. (new) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said race is an inner race of said bearing.

20. (new) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said elastic members provide a bias to the ball nut, so as to absorb backlash.

21. (new) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said cylindrical portion is interposed radially between an outer race of said bearing and an inner surface of said housing.

22. (new) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said race is an outer race of said bearing.